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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 191  
By Turner (Shelby)

A RESOLUTION To commend the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and recognize its Southeast Region V Leadership Development and Training Conference to be held in Nashville on April 6, 2001.

WHEREAS, The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) came into being in New York City in 1909 during a turbulent period in our national history; throughout the South, "Black Codes" enforced the legal separation of the races in virtually every aspect of life, and in the remainder of the nation much the same conditions prevailed through local custom; and

WHEREAS, Black citizens were limited to the most menial jobs, the worst housing, substandard medical care and education, and were subject to officially sanctioned mistreatment and frequent lynchings; historian Rayford Logan described this period as the "nadir" or low point of the African American experience in this country; and

WHEREAS, In 1908, a vicious riot occurred in Springfield, Illinois, in which scores of blacks were killed and thousands were driven from the city; appalled by this event, a group of

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concerned people - Mary White Ovington and Henry Moscowitz, white social workers; William Walling, a writer; and Oswald Garrison Villard, editor of the *New York Evening Post* - called for a national conference to examine "the Negro question"; and

WHEREAS, On February 12, 1909, Lincoln's birthday, 60 black and white leaders signed the call for such a conference; its last paragraph said: *We call upon all believers in democracy to join in a national conference for the discussion of present evils, the voicing of protests, and the renewal of the struggle for civil and political liberty*; and

WHEREAS, Four years earlier, in 1905, the Niagara Movement had begun with an organization of black people in Niagara, New York, with essentially the same goals; one of its leaders, Dr. W.E.B. DuBois, played a key role in bringing that movement's most prominent leaders into the NAACP; and

WHEREAS, The NAACP's first officers included Moorfield Storey as National President, William Walling as Chairman of the Executive Committee, John E. Milholand as Treasurer, Mr. Willard as Disbursing Treasurer, Francis Blascoer as Executive Secretary, and Dr. W.E.B. DuBois as Director of Publicity and Research; and

WHEREAS, The NAACP was created as a non-profit organization seeking political, educational, social and economic equality of minority groups; it pursues the goal of eliminating race prejudice and the removing of all barriers of racial discrimination through democratic processes; and

WHEREAS, The NAACP seeks the enactment of federal, state and local laws securing civil rights, to inform the public of the adverse effects of racial discrimination, and the education of its membership and of society at large of their constitutional rights; it has been instrumental in school and workplace desegregation, voter registration, fair housing and employment, equality in the administration of justice, and health and economic empowerment for minorities in this country; and

WHEREAS, The NAACP, as the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization, is continually renewing and adapting itself to meet current needs; it engages in the constant monitoring of government programs and policies and advocating such things as Back to School/Stay in School programs, and the Afro-Academic Cultural, Technological and Scientific Olympics for youth, Prison Program to help rehabilitate the incarcerated, and economic development of minority communities and neighborhoods, to name a few; and

WHEREAS, The NAACP remains a multi-racial, multi-cultural, primarily volunteer organization, supported by membership fees, fundraising events, private gifts, foundation grants and gifts from corporations; it receives no government funds; and

WHEREAS, On Friday, April 6, 2001, the 49th Annual Southeast Region V Convention of Leadership Development and Training will be held at the Opryland Hotel in Nashville, Tennessee with the theme of *Empowerment of the Community Through Effective Redistricting*; and

WHEREAS, The Regional Conference and its theme is in keeping with the historic goals of the NAACP, and is worthy of this legislative body's recognition and approbation; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That this General Assembly hereby salutes the long and glorious history of the NAACP and expresses its gratitude for the outstanding contributions to civil rights and economic and social justice which are the fruits of its years of struggle.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we welcome the members and other attendees of the NAACP Southeast Region V Conference to Nashville and wish them every success in their deliberations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.

